CLAY GEERDE'S COMIX WORLD

THE BRAND X STORY

NEVER LET IT BE SAID THAT BRAND X CYCLE ACCESSORIES DEPEND ON GIMMICKS FOR SALES...
...TAKE OUR NEW ENDURO TANK FOR INSTANCE...DESIGNED FOR THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF ENDURANCE RACING!
WHAT'S THE TICKING?
BUT WHAT'S THE TICKING?
WHY THAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF ALL!
A FELLA CAN GET AWFUL HUNGRY OUT ON THE TRAIL!
POP

COMIX WORLD 131. October 1, 1979. C Clay Geerdes, Box 7081, Berkeley 94707. World Rights Reserved. Logo by Nellie Kurtzman and her Daddy, Harvey.

BRYAN TALBOT

The fourth issue of NEAR MYTHS has come out in England and Bryan Talbot sent me one. It contains Chapter 4 of Talbot's lengthy "Adventures of Luther Arkwright." John Foster sent me a copy of ARGENT VOID PRESS #3 in which Talbot is interviewed and I'm going to print a few long excerpts from that zine for you American readers. Talbot first saw underground comix at The Magic Village in Manchester. "It was like a cellar where they had groups on, you could get smashed going down the stairs. In this place they used to sell OZ magazine and that was the first place I saw the Freak Brothers, Robert Crumb, Greg Irons, etc., and that's how I discovered American undergrounds." Talbot did his own first work for undergrounds in BRAINSTORM 1 "although prior to this Alex (Bonk) Waszynko and I did BOG STANDARD KOMIX which featured the Superharris strip; we did these strips while Alex and I were at Preston Poly, which was then called Harris College, thus the name Superharris. Superharris was a series of one page strips which originally appeared in the college newspaper. Although the actual BOG STANDARD KOMIX magazine wasn't published until about 2 years ago, the material was produced about 1972 so I suppose you could say that was my first underground work. As I've said, I used to live in London for a time and we used to go down to the head shops on Portobello Road and one of these stalls was "Alchemy." This was about the time when , if you walked down the street and someone else walked past with long hair you'd smile and start talking. It was like that in Portobello, you didn't just go to buy something, you'd stop and talk to people and enjoy yourself. It was here that I got talking to Lee who ran the stall. Anyway, when I was in my second year at college doing graphic design, I got married and I thought we could do with a little more money. We started a shop in Preston called "The White Rabbit" and kept it going for about a year. We finished about 20£ in debt which wasn't bad seeing as the shop kept us alive for a year. Lee was one of the people I bought stuff off wholesale to sell in the shop. I used to go down to London to get stuff for the shop and it was on one of those trips that I took some drawings to COZMIC COMICS and they accepted a strip called "The Insane Scientist," but COZMIC folded before it ran. I'd shown the stuff to Lee and told him I'd got the idea for a complete comic story, which was the first Chester P. Hackenbush story. This was about 1972. He offered to print it if I ever got it finished. He would have been able to do this because he used to run this catalogue called THE ALCHEMY ALMANAC which listed his stock; he offered to use half the catalog for his stock and the other half for my story." A few years passed in which Bryan finished college, then about 1975 he looked Lee up and they went to the printer with what was to be the first issue of BRAINSTORM. Hackenbush was mainly Bryan."I put myself in these situations and thought "What would I do in that situation?'" Lately, Bryan has been doing a new strip called FRANK FAZACKERLY-SPACE ACE OF THE FUTURE. "In most of my strips I try to experiment, tackling the strips in different ways." "Frank Fazackerly is a Bob Hope type of character, like in say THE PALEFACE, who is always trying to repair the mess he's made." The strip, kind of a hip, sexy up-date of Buck Rogers, runs in a publication called AD ASTRA. Foster asked Talbot his opinion of the current ug scene in Britain. "Well, it's almost non-existant at the moment apart from a thing called THE WOODLICE REPORT which I saw recently. I'd say NEAR MYTHS and GRAPHIXUS are more ground-level comics, which is a phrase coined by Mike Friedrich for his STAR*REACH comics. STREET COMIX is more alternative so I suppose underground comix as I see them are dead. Undergrounds contain sex and drugs and rock and roll (sorry about that) and are probably aimed at someone who's high on acid. I don't really count political comics as undergrounds. That's more propaganda. I think it's like Jerry Rubin, the yippie leader said on t-v recently. The underground scene got to the point where everything had been done. . ."

NEAR MYTHS

EDITORIAL

Flicking through our mail, it seems that one of the most regular statements made is, "It's great to see a British comic, but why aren't there more?" After editing **Near Myths** for a year, the answer is now apparent.

There are two major factors involved: The first of these is an incredible apathy within the trade as far as any comic not aimed at the children's market is concerned, unless, of course, it is backed up with a five figure advertising budget. The process of getting a comic on the streets involves three stages—(1) distribution, (2) wholesale, (3) retail. Finding a national distributor, is still reasonably easy, however the next two stages can be so difficult as to appear, at times, impossible. Both wholesalers and retailers come out with such gems as, "Adults don't read comics"—need I say more? This very attitude is responsible for the rapid growth of specialist shops in Britain; unfortunately however, these are not yet numerous enough to sell out a comic.

The other factor is a little known law, which effectively says that if you publish or sell a comic which is considered offensive to children, you can be prosecuted. This is the case, even if the cover makes it perfectly clear that the comic is for sale to adults only. The only way out is to prove that the comic is art; however, attempting this is generally impractical as the costs involved in fighting an action of this kind are outside the budget of most non-established publishers.

Therefore for all of you who read comics and are interested in the extent to which they are moulded by external forces, I have prepared the following statements.

(1) No comic artist/writer can escape censorship, be it self imposed, editorial or legislative.

(2) The editor/publisher must act as censor since it is he/she who will be prosecuted.

(3) The limits within which the artist/scriptwriter can work are extremely narrow if the content is to be of sufficient mentality to be adult and yet totally non-offensive to children.

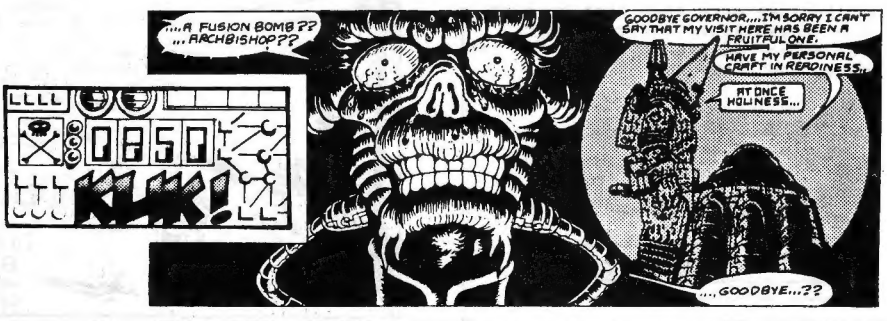
(4) No comic will be produced for any reasonable financial return unless the majority of sales are overseas.

(5) Until it becomes generally accepted that adults do read comics, they will not be generally available from news stands.

(6) No artist/scriptwriter will ever earn a decent living from drawing comics the way they want to unless they sell their material abroad.

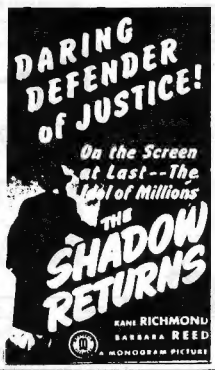
In summing up, I would like to say that most of these problems are unique to Britain; on a personal note, I would say also that these problems go beyond comics into other fields. Despite all this, I will continue to publish **Near Myths** as often as can be afforded on the premise that things can only improve—I am sure that the comic can survive despite the problems. Anyway enough's enough, and I hope that you get as much enjoymsnt from **Near Myths 4** as we have had putting it together.

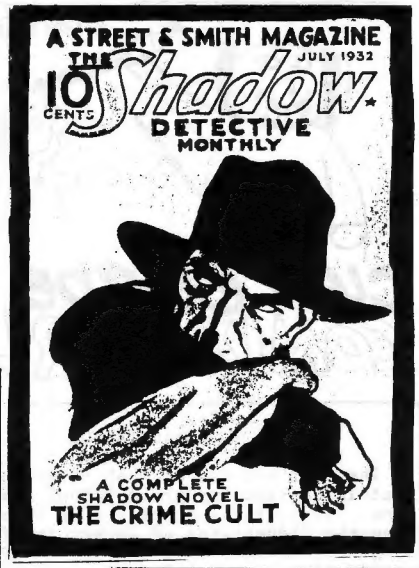
Rob King


...A FUSION BOMB??
...ARCHBISHOP??
KLK!
GOODBYE GOVERNOR,...I'M SORRY I CAN'T SAY THAT MY VISIT HERE HAS BEEN A FRUITFUL ONE.
HAVE MY PERSONAL CRAFT IN READINESS...
AT ONCE HOLINESS...
...GOODBYE...??

THE Shadow SCRAPBOOK

by Walter B. Gibson





If we ever needed The Shadow, we need him these days. He wouldn't let the innocent suffer while the guilty went free with the help of corrupt psychiatrists and a perverted system of justice. Created by Walter B. Gibson in August of 1931 (the first novel was THE LIVING SHADOW), The Shadow has had the longest continuity of any pulp crimefighter, outlasting DOC SAVAGE and THE SPIDER and all of his competitors. The GIBSON SCRAPBOOK shows the range and scope of the character, giving a complete list of the Maxwell Grant novels, representative black and white and color cover illos, a complete radio script, a Chronology of all the radio shows from July 31, 1930 to Dec. 26, 1954, and lots of material on Shadow films, comic books, comic strips, premiums, and memorabilia. Perhaps most interesting is the extensive biographic introduction by Gibson who provides a lot of insight into his working style.

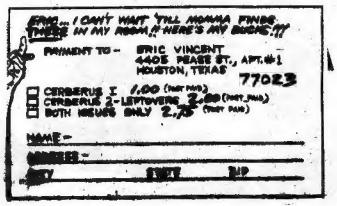
THE SHADOW—Rough and Tumble *By Maxwell Grant*

GOOD WORK! GET THE GIRL'S GUN TOO!
BUT NICK'S HENCHMEN SPRING TO HIS ASSISTANCE
DON'T SHOOT, LARRY! THEY'RE UNARMED!
BUT THEY'RE GETTING AWAY!
HE'S SAFE-LET THE POLICE FIND HIM. TELL NO ONE YOU WERE HERE
SLAM!

Included in THE SHADOW SCRAPBOOK (Harcourt-Brace. 1979, $8.95. paperback) is the novel "The Riddle of the Rangoon Ruby." The radio script is the "Death House Rescue" from 1937. More prolific than Asimov, Gibson wrote over 117 books on magic & related subjects along with his 282 Shadow novels. He was born in Philadelphia in 1897 and is 82 this year. C.G.

ELFQUEST continues to be a rare comic art phenomenon in issue #5. Now in magazine format, this epic tale of a band of wandering elves has never let us down yet. You can still get all of them for $5 plus 25¢ each postage from Warp Graphics, 2 Reno Road, Poughkeepsie, N Y 12603. A panel of Wendy Pini's artwork is reprinted below to give you a taste of ELFQUEST.* SLUG 8 is the end of a trail for Jerome Schiller, who is leaving the university at Santa Cruz and going out into the world. This farewell issue has artwork by Schiller, Jim Phillips (see the Brand X panel on page 1), Jim Urban, Marilyn Hinze, and others. It's $1 pp from Jerome, P. O. Box 2391, Santa Cruz, CA 95063.* The first issue of ELECTRIC PETE COMIX goes for $1.50pp from Electric Pete Studios, P. O. Box 962, Newark, N. J. 07101. 36 pages of B/w funny stuff.* WOWEEKAZOWIE! 4 is well worth $1.50 as you can tell from this panel with the gay cavalier fencing the lady--a fine comic art issue. You can get it from Peter Iro, 455 Potomac Avenue, Buffalo, N Y 14213. The GAY BLADE story is by Mark Gruenwald with inks by Dennis Jensen. © 1979.* The latest comix world mini-comic is THE LITTLE BOOK OF BIG TITS. 50¢ and a stamp from Clay. The little comix are picking up a readership. One writer told me he liked the funny stuff in them more than that he read in the "established underground!" Coming soon: ANIMAL REVOLT 2, BABYFAT 7 and 8, and three new titles.

STAR*REACH 18 will be the last issue in comic book format. Mike Friedrich is shifting to books and he says #19 will be a trade paperback (early 1980 release). The anthology, STAR*REACH GREATIST HITS will have a new cover by Frank Brunner, plus a new color Elric of Melnibone story by Michael Moorcock (illos by Brunner). 120 pp. Perhaps by Christmas.* SPIRIT 21 features Will Eisner's version of Hansel and Gretel and "Outer Space: DP on the Moon," an Eisner story, drawn by Wally Wood. Wood's THE KING OF THE WORLD has been produced in color (the Wizard King material from Witzend which has influenced the film WIZARDS and the ELFQUEST epic by the Pinis).* Doug Bryson says he is working on the last pages of his new CAPTAIN RETRO book.* The new Ed McBain novel is CALYPSO and in it there is a grand ball where all of the guests have to come as Blondies and Dagwoods. One of those Blondies turns out to be a killer and Carella has to find out which one. Great stuff. C.G.



GOSH! THIS TIME THE SPIRIT AIN'T AROUND TO SAVE US! BEST WE START WALKING, GRETEL..
CHEE IT'S SPOOKY HERE.. MAYBE WE SHOULDA PACKED A ROD!
DEAD END
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